

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 07549 031716Z
ACTION NEA-10

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PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 NRC-05 PM-05 ACDA-12 SAS-02
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8467

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7549

DEPT PASS TO ICA

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MNUC PK
SUBJ: GOP BLOCKS DISTRIBUTION OF ICA PUBLICATION

SUMMARY: GOP HAS WITHHELD PERMISSION FOR ICA TO DISTRIBUTE A PERIODICAL CALLED "PANORAMA" ON GROUNDS THAT ONE ARTICLE ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR GOP. MFA OFFICIAL ADMITS THAT THE ARTICLE, WHICH DEALS WITH ECONOMICS OF REPROCESSING, IS ENTIRELY FACTUAL, AND DOES NOT MENTION PAKISTAN, BUT FEARS THAT "PAK PUBLIC" WILL ACCUSE MFA OF SOFTNESS ON REPROCESSING ISSUE IF MFA ALLOWS PUBLICATION. AMB INTENDS TO ESCALATE ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER AND OUTLINES A SCENARIO FOR DISCUSSIONS AT HIGH LEVEL OF MFA. END SUMMARY

1. PANORAMA MAGAZINE PUBLISHED BY ICA HAS LONG HISTORY IN PAKISTAN (FOUNDED BY THEN INFO OFFICER DAVID NEWSOM IN LATE 1940'S). LATEST ISSUE, PRINTED IN 18,000 COPIES, CONTAINS SEVERAL ARTICLES ON ENERGY PROBLEMS AND NUCLEAR POWER, INCLUDING JOE NYE SPEECH TO HOUSTON ROTARY, AND A SIGNED PIECE BY PAK ATOMIC ENERGY CHIEF MUNIR KHAN, COPIES ARE AVAILABLE IN ICA/NEA. MFA DIRECTOR-AMERICA, TOUQUIR HUSSEIN HAS TOLD ACTING CPAO CHIANCONE THAT ONE SHORT PIECE ON "THE ECONOMICS OF NUCLEAR REPROCESSING" CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR GOP BECAUSE IT MAKES "TOO GOOD A CASE"

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DEMONSTRATING LACK OF ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION FOR REPROCESSING PLANTS IN ABSENCE OF ABOUT 50 LARGE POWER REACTORS. MFA IS CONCERNED THAT IF THEY APPROVE DISTRIBUTION THERE WILL BE PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS OF SOFTNESS IN MFA ON REPROCESSING ISSUE, AND TOUQUIR, CITING HIGHER AUTHORITY, HAS WITHHELD PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE. THE ISSUE WAS CONCEIVED EARLY THIS YEAR IN CONSULTATION WITH AMB, WAS PRINTED IN JUNE, AND IN LINE WITH

ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES HAS SINCE JULY 5 BEEN BEFORE GOP FOR PERMISSION TO DISTRIBUTE. CHIANCONE HAS HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH TOUQUIR, EMPHASIZING THAT GOP IS TRYING TO PREVENT ADMITTEDLY ACCURATE FACTS FROM BEING PUT BEFORE THE PAK PUBLIC IN AN ARTICLE THAT DOES NOT EVEN MENTION PAKISTAN, AND THAT EMBASSY MUST CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS AT HIGHER LEVEL BECAUSE WE CANNOT AGREE VOLUNTARILY TO SUPPRESS THE ISSUE.

2. AMB INTENDS, UNLESS ADVISED OTHERWISE FROM WASHINGTON, TO APPROACH HIGH LEVEL OF MFA EARLY NEXT WEEK WITH FOLLOWING ARGUMENTS (AMONG OTHERS):

-- AMB HAS CONSULTED WASHINGTON AND THE FOLLOWING REFLECTS WASHINGTON VIEWS.

-- A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE IS INVOLVED, AND WE CANNOT AGREE, AS MFA SUGGESTED, TO WITHDRAW THE ISSUE VOLUNTARILY. WE SEE NO REASON WHY USG SHOULD BE DEBARRED FROM PUTTING ADMITTEDLY ACCURATE FACTS BEFORE PAKISTANI PUBLIC, IN NONPOLEMIC JUSTIFICATION OF USG WORLDWIDE POLICIES.

-- IF GOP PERSISTS IN REFUSAL, THERE WILL BE ADVERSE REACTIONS WITHIN USG AND ULTIMATELY IN US PUBLIC WHEN FACT OF GOP SUPPRESSION BECOMES PUBLICLY KNOWN.

-- WE REALIZE THAT DURING THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO THE GOP MAY NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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WISH TO FUEL ANY DOMESTIC CONTROVERSIES ABOUT REPROCESSING. WE COULD, IF GOP INSISTS, AGREE TO VERY LIMITED DELAY OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE MAGAZINE BUT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THERE IS AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE INVOLVED WE MUST QUITE SOON PUSH THE MATTER TO A CONCLUSION. WE HOPE THAT THE GOP WILL SEE IT IN ITS OWN INTEREST, AS WELL AS IN USG INTEREST, TO PERMIT DISTRIBUTION. HUMMEL

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Message Attributes

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